

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06

/060 W

----- 068768

R 230507Z MAY 75

FM AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2768

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

AMCONSUL BRISBANE

AMCONSUL PERTH

AMCONSUL PORT MORESBY

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

USMISSION GENEVA

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TAGS ELAB, AS

SUBJ: ARBITRATION COMMISSION ADJOURNS METAL WORKERS' WAGE APPLICATION

REF: MELBOURNE 636

1. MR JUSTICE JOHN MOORE OF ARBITRATION COMMISSION, MAY 22ND, ANNOUNCED THAT METAL WORKERS' UNION HAD NOT SUSTAINED THEIR ARGUMENT TO SECURE A WAGE INCREASE IN THE "CATCH-UP" PRINCIPLES ENUNCIATED IN THE "NATIONAL WAGE CASE" OF APRIL 1975.

2. AT THE SAME TIME, JUDGE MOORE ADJOURNED HIS DECISION, WHICH MEANS QUESTION OF INCREASE FOR METAL WORKERS WILL NOW BE MINGLED IN DEBATE AFTER MID-JULY.

3. PRESIDENTIAL MEMBER OF ARBITRATION COMMISSION, DR JOE ISAAC,
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TOLD LABATT, MAY 22ND, THAT JULY HEARING WOULD BE IN THE

LIGHT OF COST OF LIVING STATISTICS, FOR THE SECOND QUARTER, ENDING JUNE 30TH. DEBATE BEFORE COMMISSION WILL BE DELAYED TWO WEEKS TO ALLOW PARTIES TO PREPARE CASE AFTER STATISTICS BECOME AVAILABLE.

4. REACTION TO MOORE'S ANNOUNCEMENT HAS ALREADY CAUSED METAL WORKERS' UNION, REPRESENTING 650,000 WORKERS THROUGHOUT COUNTRY, TO CALL SHOP STEWARDS MEETINGS, STARTING MONDAY, MAY 26TH, WHEN REPRESENTATIVES OF 165,000 WORKERS IN STATE OF VICTORIA WILL HOLD EMERGENCY DELEGATED CONFERENCE, TO CONSIDER ANNOUNCEMENT. INITIAL REACTION FROM NATIONAL LEADERS OF METAL WORKERS INDICATES THAT, AT THEIR LEVEL, UNION IS SHOCKED AND GRAVELY CONCERNED. LABATT REPORTS HOWEVER, THAT SHOP FLOOR REACTION AT THIS EARLY STAGE, DOES NOT INDICATE WIDESPREAD SUPPORT FOR UNION LEADERSHIP MILITANT STAND.

5. NATIONAL DIRECTOR, IAN LITTLE, OF METAL TRADES EMPLOYERS' FEDERATION, TOLD LABATT ALSO, MAY 22ND, SMALL GROUP OF FEDERATION OFFICERS MET WITH FEDERAL TREASURER, DR JIM CAIRNS, PRIVATELY ON MAY 21ST. LITTLE'S GROUP ASKED CAIRNS, IN ANTICIPATION OF MOORE'S DECISION AGAINST UNION, WHAT SUPPORT EMPLOYERS COULD LOOK FOR FROM FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, IN EVENT OF WORKERS UN-REST IN COMING WEEKS. UNFORTUNATELY, GROUP FOUND CAIRNS VERY DISPIRITED AND DEPRESSED, AND COULD NOT OBTAIN MUCH USEFUL INFORMATION FROM HIM. CAIRNS, WHO IS ON RECORD PUBLICLY, AS SUPPORTING INDEXATION, WOULD NOT ADMIT THAT OVER-REACTION BY UNIONS IN PERIOD BEFORE JULY INDEXATION HEARING, COULD HOPELESSLY WRECK WHOLE INDEXATION SYSTEM. HE WOULD ADMIT ONLY THAT SITUATION COULD BECOME CRITICAL, BUT WOULD NOT PROMISE ANY ACTION IN SUPPORT OF COMMISSION OR INDEXATION CONCEPT. LITTLE WENT ON TO SAY THAT AT MEETING OF EMPLOYERS, CALLED FOR MAY 23RD, HE EXPECTED GREAT EFFORT WOULD BE MADE TO PRESERVE EMPLOYERS' COOL IN THE FACE OF EXPECTED PROVOCATION BY UNION MILITANTS. LITTLE SAID THAT IF SYSTEM IS WRECKED, HE DID NOT WANT EMPLOYERS TO BE BLAMED.

6. COMMENT:
JUDGE MMORE ALSO NOTED THAT PERIOD FROM NOW UNTIL JULY WAGE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DEBATE COULD BE WRECKED BY PRECIPITATE ACTION ON PART OF EITHER UNIONS OR EMPLOYERS. LABATT CONJECTURES THAT THIS IS AGAIN OPPORTUNITY FOR LABOR MOVEMENT TO SORT ITSELF OUT. ACTU PRESIDENT HAAWKE, HAS BEEN TAKING FOR MONTHS OF POSSIBILITY THAT JUST SUCH A SITUATION WOULD EMERGE, WHEN HE COULD CLEARLY IDENTIFY FOR PUBLIC, JUST WHO IN THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT HAD THE REAL INTEREST OF AUSTRALIA AT HEART. HAWKE BELIEVES THAT IN SUCH A SITUATION, REPUDIATION OF

SUCH COMMUNIST LEADERS AS JOHN HALFPENNY, AND LAURIE
CARMICHAEL, OF THE METAL WORKERS' UNION, BY THEIR OWN RANK
AND FILE, WOULD BE A "PREGNANT POSSIBILITY". LABATT
CONCLUDES THAT, IF EVENTS CONTINUE TO MOVE IN DIRECTION
IN WHICH THEY ARE NOW POINTED, IT WOULD BE A LONG, COLD,
DARK WINTER FOR RADICALS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARBITRATION, WAGES, LAW, COMMITTEES, LABOR UNIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MELBOU00648
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750184-0384
From: MELBOURNE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750523/aaaaauuc.tel
Line Count: 122
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 MELBOURNE 636
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <04 NOV 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ARBITRATION COMMISSION ADJOURNS METAL WORKERS' WAGE APPLICATION
TAGS: ELAB, AS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006